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It covers (1) U.S. Federal government documents, especially those from executive branch departments and those from the Congressional branch - - Committees, the U.S. General Accounting Office, and the Congressional Budget Office; (2) policy briefs from major private think tanks, especially those in Washington; and (3) major reports from national professional associations. A few new high quality, high relevance think tank-sponsored books are also listed.

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Title Index

[Item#1](#) Blinded: The Decline of U.S. Earth Monitoring Capabilities and Its Consequences for National Security

[Item#2](#) The Debt Limit: History and Recent Increases

[Item#3](#) Democrats Not Eager for an Obama Challenger

[Item#4](#) Did the Housing Boom Increase Household Spending?

[Item#5](#) Digital Learning and Technology: Federal Policy Recommendations to Seize the Opportunity - and Promising Practices Than Inspire Them

[Item#6](#) Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States

[Item#7](#) Global Economy: Is Anybody in Control?

[Item#8](#) Immigration and Poverty in America's Suburbs

[Item#9](#) In the US, Clean Water Is No Guarantee

[Item#10](#) The Interplay of Borders, Turf, Cyberspace, and Jurisdiction: Issues Confronting U.S. Law Enforcement

[Item#11](#) Preventing Obesity and Its Consequences: Highlights of RAND Health Research

[Item#12](#) Rising Fears of New Global Recession

[Item#13](#) Taiwan: Major U.S. Arms Sales Since 1990

[Item#14](#) U.S.-China Military Contacts: Issues for Congress

Reports

Item#1

Blinded: The Decline of U.S. Earth Monitoring Capabilities and Its Consequences for National Security. Center for a New American Security. Christine Parthemore and Will Rogers. Web posted August 1, 2011.

The United States depends on satellite systems for managing the unconventional challenges of the 21st century in ways that are rarely acknowledged. This is particularly true for satellites that monitor climate change and other environmental trends, which, in the words of the Department of Defense's (DOD's) 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, "will shape the operating environment, roles, and missions" of DOD. According to the report, "By 2016, only seven of NASA's current 13 earth monitoring satellites are expected to be operational, leaving a crucial information gap that will hinder national security planning."

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_Blinded_ParthemoreRogers_0.pdf [PDF format, 11 pages].

Item#2

The Debt Limit: History and Recent Increases. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. D. Andrew Austin and Mindy R. Levit. August 3, 2011.

Total federal debt can increase in two ways. First, debt increases when the government sells debt to the public to finance budget deficits and acquire the financial resources needed to meet its obligations. This increases debt held by the public. Second, debt increases when the federal government issues debt to certain government accounts, such as the Social Security, Medicare, and Transportation trust funds. The recent economic slowdown led to a sharply higher deficits in recent years, which led to a series of debt limit increases.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL31967.pdf> [PDF format, 33 pages].

Item#3

Democrats Not Eager for an Obama Challenger. Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. August 10, 2011.

Rank-and-file Democrats are not eager to see Barack Obama challenged by other candidates for their party's nomination in 2012. Despite speculation that the Democratic base has become increasingly disillusioned with Obama, far fewer Democrats want to see Obama challenged for the nomination than supported a primary challenge to Bill Clinton in December 1994.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://people-press.org/2011/08/10/democrats-not-eager-for-an-obama-challenger/?src=prc-headline> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#4

Did the Housing Boom Increase Household Spending? Center for Retirement Research at Boston College. Shenyi Jiang et al. Web posted August 2011.

Between 1995 and 2007, inflation-adjusted house prices more than doubled in some areas of the United States. During this unprecedented boom, households spent more and reduced their saving rate. A key question is how much of the increased spending was related to rising house prices, as opposed to other factors? And, if households spent more when prices soared, are they likely to cut back during the housing bust? The answers can help in assessing retirement saving trends, according to the brief.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://crr.bc.edu/images/stories/Briefs/IB_11-10_508.pdf [PDF format, 7 pages].

Item#5

Digital Learning and Technology: Federal Policy Recommendations to Seize the Opportunity - and Promising Practices Than Inspire Them. Alliance for Excellent Education. August 2, 2011.

Technology and digital learning provide innovative opportunities to improve education, personalize learning for each student, and have better student achievement. This brief highlights the promising practices that some schools are employing to transform student learning and the federal policies that can assist schools in making that transformation. The promising practices shared in this brief point to several key areas in which technology and digital learning can make a difference for teachers and students. They include examples that illustrate how some states, districts, and schools are maximizing the potential of technology and digital learning to change student outcomes. The federal policies emphasize that the federal government has the opportunity to assist states, school districts, and public schools by creating policies that encourage innovation and provide options for digital learning and technology.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.all4ed.org/files/DigitalLearning.pdf> [PDF format, 14 pages].

Item#6

Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States. The White House. August 3, 2011.

The brief presents the President's plan for how the Federal Government will support and help empower American communities and their local partners to prevent violent extremism.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/empowering_local_partners.pdf [PDF format, 12 pages].

Item#7

Global Economy: Is Anybody in Control? YaleGlobal. David Dapice. August 9, 2011.

Around the globe, national leaders show no clue, no confidence, about how to re-engineer job creation or global economic security, contends the author. The U.S. has many resources for resolving its large

debt, but bickering and stubborn quests for power prevent speedy resolution. Europe's resistance to enact long-term policies on unequal accrual of debt among its member states and grudging rescue do little to inspire confidence. Debt has weakened once strong economies, leaving them highly vulnerable in the event of unavoidable disasters, as is the case with Japan and its debt/GDP ratio of 200 percent. Emerging economies, so dependent on exports to wealthy nations and natural-resource extraction, offer limited hope. Around the world, the young confront a bleak future with limited job prospects, huge imbalances of all sorts and institutions under strain. National leaders resist efforts to pursue the common good and seek instead the pettiest of political victories.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/global-economy-anybody-control> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#8

Immigration and Poverty in America's Suburbs. Brookings Institution. Roberto Suro et al. August 4, 2011.

As the foreign-born have grown more numerous, they have dispersed geographically. Some metropolitan areas have become immigrant gateways for the first time. And within many metropolitan areas, increasing numbers of immigrants have settled in suburban communities, where they were once only a sparse presence, according to the report.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2011/0804_immigration_suro_wilson_singer/0804_immigration_suro_wilson_singer.pdf [PDF format, 21 pages].

Item#9

In the US, Clean Water Is No Guarantee. YaleGlobal. Susan Froetschel. August 11, 2011

Americans use twice as much water as Europeans do and pay half as much for it. Low fees lead many Americans to take their abundant supplies for granted. Globally, most water is used for irrigation purposes, but in the US., thermoelectric generation requires more water. "During an economic recession, protecting water supplies takes a back seat to industries that promise jobs," notes Froetschel. "Anti-government fervor dangerously coincides with industry resistance to government protections." The small not-for-profit water industry is highly fragmented, with tens of thousands of waterworks under state and local jurisdiction and a hodgepodge of laws that can only lead to shortages and conflicts. Severe drought throughout the South already strains groundwater supplies. Conservatives express anxiety about dependence on foreign oil supplies, yet show little concern about the future of water supplies. The U.S. could be making a mistake prioritizing energy production over protection of its water supply, according to the author.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/us-clean-water-no-guarantee> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#10

The Interplay of Borders, Turf, Cyberspace, and Jurisdiction: Issues Confronting U.S. Law Enforcement. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Kristin M. Finklea. July 19, 2011.

Savvy criminals constantly develop new techniques to target U.S. persons, businesses, and interests. Individual criminals as well as broad criminal networks exploit geographic borders, criminal turf, cyberspace, and law enforcement jurisdiction to dodge law enforcement countermeasures. Further, the interplay of these realities can potentially encumber policing measures. In light of these interwoven realities, policy makers may question how to best design policies to help law enforcement combat ever-evolving criminal threats.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41927.pdf> [PDF format, 41 pages].

Item#11

Preventing Obesity and Its Consequences: Highlights of RAND Health Research. RAND Corporation. August 3, 2011.

The brief summarizes key RAND studies on the causes of obesity, its economic and health consequences, and potential strategies for prevention, including work on health care costs, junk food, food deserts, school meals, and proximity of parks.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_briefs/2011/RAND_RB9508.pdf [PDF format, 7 pages].

Item#12

Rising Fears of New Global Recession. Council on Foreign Relations. Jonathan Masters. August 5, 2011.

A tumultuous week in global markets that saw major indexes plunge aroused concerns of a double-dip recession driven by U.S. economic lethargy and the European Union's resurgent sovereign debt crisis.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.cfr.org/financial-crises/rising-fears-new-global-recession/p25599> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#13

Taiwan: Major U.S. Arms Sales Since 1990. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Shirley A. Kan. August 2, 2011.

The report discusses U.S. security assistance to Taiwan, or Republic of China (ROC), including policy issues for Congress and legislation. Congress has oversight of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), P.L. 96-8, which has governed arms sales to Taiwan since 1979, when the U.S. recognized the People's Republic of China (PRC) instead of the ROC. Defense Secretary Robert Gates submitted to Congress in February 2010 an unclassified assessment of Taiwan's air defense forces, including its F-16 fighters. On August 1, 181 Members of the House sent a letter to President Obama to urge him to sell F-16C/D fighters.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/weapons/RL30957.pdf> [PDF format, 72 pages].

Item#14

U.S.-China Military Contacts: Issues for Congress. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Shirley A. Kan. July 26, 2011.

The report discusses policy issues regarding military-to-military contacts with the People's Republic of China (PRC) and provides a record of major contacts and crises since 1993. Issues for Congress include whether the Obama Administration has complied with legislation overseeing dealings with the China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) and pursued contacts with the PLA that advance a prioritized set of U.S. security interests, especially the operational safety of U.S. military personnel.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL32496.pdf> [PDF format, 72 pages].